



REBUILD IOWA OFFICE (RIO) LEGISLATIVE WEEKLY

MARCH 26, 2009

AN ELECTRONIC COPY OF THIS ISSUE AS WELL AS PAST ISSUES

CAN BE FOUND AT:

www.rio.iowa.gov/news/legislative_weekly/index.html

RIO MISSION:

The Rebuild Iowa Office will lead the State of Iowa's efforts to rebuild safer, stronger and smarter in the wake of the 2008 severe storms and catastrophic flooding.

RIO VISION:

We envision a resilient Iowa that will be safe, sustainable and economically strong for its people, reaffirming its ties to the land, rivers, environment and rich cultural history.

CONTACT THE RIO:

502 E. Ninth Street
Wallace Building
Second Floor
Des Moines, IA 50319

Phone: (515) 242-5004

Fax: (515) 242-5006

E-mail the RIO at:
contact@rio.iowa.gov

Visit us on the Web at:
www.rio.iowa.gov

FIVE IOWA COMMUNITIES SELECTED FOR EPA'S SMART GROWTH ASSISTANCE

Five Iowa communities affected by 2008's tornadoes and floods will receive assistance in recovering stronger and smarter through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Smart Growth Implementation Assistance (SGIA) program.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Rebuild Iowa Office (RIO) and the Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED) announced that New Hartford, Cedar Falls, Cedar Rapids, Coralville and Iowa

City have been chosen to receive expert technical assistance to help with growth and redevelopment.

This assistance is typically awarded through a competitive application process. No Iowa cities have been chosen in the

(Continued on page 2)

REBUILD IOWA ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETS TO DISCUSS DISASTER RECOVERY EFFORTS

The Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission (RIAC) met Monday to discuss progress in Iowa's disaster recovery efforts and to address its involvement in long-term disaster planning.

During the meeting, RIO staff reviewed the status of the 12 recommendations made in the RIAC's 120-day

Report and provided an update on community and regional recovery outreach, communication plans and legislative issues.

Commissioners encouraged the RIO to continue its efforts in coordinating the disaster recovery, working with officials to better streamline federal disaster

aid and showing progress to Iowans.

The RIAC also discussed its future role in the disaster recovery process. The Commission was initially charged with creating a 45-day and 120-day report including both short- and long-term recommendations for Iowa's disaster recovery. Commissioners reached a consensus that their initial mission had been met and plan to discuss their role going forward at the conclusion of this year's legislative session.

"At this time, all of our recommendations have been put into legislative proposals and turned over to policy-makers to implement. This is a great accomplishment," said Commissioner Jim Davis of Charles City. "But we still know there are unmet needs out there."



Commissioner Jim Davis (left) speaks with Iowa Finance Authority's Joe O'Hern before Monday's RIAC meeting.

HF 64 UPDATE: UNMET NEEDS DISASTER GRANT

The Iowa Unmet Needs Disaster Grant Program established by HF 64 is being implemented locally through 26 Long-Term Recovery Committees (LTRCs) serving the 78 Presidentially-declared counties eligible for Individual Assistance.

Each LTRC uses its established case management protocols to determine unmet needs. Case advocates work with disaster-affected clients to determine their needs and how best to meet those needs. Services include assistance in navigating

the available federal, state and community resources as well as developing an individual recovery plan.

All LTRCs are currently assisting clients in their individual recovery efforts.

LTRCs in 22 counties are working with applicants for this program and submitting completed applications to the Dept. of Human Services (DHS). These counties alone serve more than 60% of disaster-impacted Iowans.

LTRCs in the remaining eligible counties are working to add the grant

program to their list of available resources.

LTRCs provide duplication of benefit checks to prevent fraud and ensure non-duplicative assistance.

Forty-five counties, administered by the Iowa Disaster Human Resource Council (IDHRC), plan to begin submitting grant applications on April 15.

Individuals with questions about this program are encouraged to contact the Rebuild Iowa Office toll-free at 1-866-849-0323.



COMMUNITY DISASTER GRANT UPDATE:

Applications for the Community Disaster Grant are due next Wednesday, April 1.

Cities and counties must apply to Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division if they wish to receive this funding.

Applications must be sent via e-mail to cdg@iowa.gov (by midnight on April 1) or via certified mail to 7105 NW 70th Ave. Camp Dodge Building W-4 Johnston, IA 50131 (postmarked no later than April 1).

For more info, visit www.iowahomelandsecurity.org

SMART GROWTH (from page 1)

past. However, after last summer's level of devastation, ten cities in Iowa were eligible for the program. Eight cities applied and five were chosen to participate.

Each selected community will receive direct technical assistance from a team of national experts to work on redevelopment plans with local leaders. Team members will have expertise in disciplines relevant to the unique needs of each community.

"This is an excellent example of how partnerships between various state and federal agencies benefit the communities most severely affected by a disaster," said FEMA ESF #14 Long-Term Community Recovery Branch Director Steve Castaner.

Rebuild Iowa Office
Community Planning

Specialist Aaron Todd helped coordinate the application process and will continue to work with the EPA and other agency partners to provide assistance. "Incorporating sustainable redevelopment policies in Iowa's recovery not only reduces our impact on the environment, but also fosters economic growth and helps to reduce the potential damage of future natural disasters," he said.

Special Projects Coordinator Stephanie Weisenbach with the Community Development Division of IDED, is also collaborating with the communities and various agencies on the Smart Growth program.

"Cities are still faced with complex challenges about how and where to rebuild after last year's natural disasters," she said.

"Expert help on sustainable redevelopment choices can help overcome these challenges and

create more vibrant places for businesses and families."

Cedar Falls Mayor Jon Crews said city officials are appreciative of the technical assistance, adding that city staff found out about the SGIA program shortly after returning from a Smart Growth conference in New Mexico.

"It was perfect timing. Hopefully this will help us grow well and thoughtfully, taking into account transportation, land use issues, flood plain management and planning more green development."

Initial visits to each of the communities by the technical assistance teams and representatives from the various agencies involved will take place between March 24 through 26.

To read more about each city's specific project, visit the RIO Web site at www.rio.iowa.gov.

